

TAMARIND LITHOGRAPHY WORKSHOP, INC.



Artist: James Kelly  
c/o East Hampton Gallery  
New York, New York

Tamarind Fellowship: July - August 1963

A suite of lithographs titled "8 from 9" by New York Abstractionist James Kelly, was created at Tamarind during July and August of 1963. Kelly did preliminary studies for the suite by making collages of cancelled proofs, cutting and pasting colors and textures until he had the desired effect. Many such areas then were defined on the stone with crisp black crayon outlines tying together the diverse elements into the witty structures characteristic of this artist's style.

Artisan-printer Aris Koutroulis hand-printed all the editions, working collaboratively with Kelly who assisted at the press.

The suite measures 19" x 13½" and contains eight multi-color prints on Rives BFK paper. Price for the suite is \$400.

In addition to the suite, Kelly did six individual lithographs in various sizes up to 22" x 30". These are untitled and are priced from \$50 to \$130 each.

Kelly was born in Philadelphia in 1913 and studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Barnes Foundation and the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. In 1957 he taught art at the University of California, Berkeley, then moved to New York City. Kelly has exhibited nationally since 1952, has won many purchase prizes and is represented in various major collections. His works are in the permanent collection of the San Francisco Museum of Art.

NOTE: PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

OCT 20 1967

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Los Angeles, October 1, 1963 -- Tamarind announces the completion of a suite of lithographs titled "8 from 9" by New York abstractionist James Kelly, created during July and August of 1963 in Los Angeles. The suite measures 19x13 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and contains eight multi-color prints on Rives BFK paper. The nine Tamarind Impressions were pulled on Arches paper. Price for the suite is \$400; individual prints average fifteen percent higher.

Kelly did preliminary studies for the suite by making collages of cancelled proofs, cutting and pasting colors and textures until he had the desired effect. Many such areas then were defined on the stone with crisp black crayon outlines tying together the diverse elements into the witty structures characteristic of this artist's style.

Printer-fellow Aris Koutroulis of Baton Rouge, La. hand-printed all the editions, working collaboratively with Kelly who assisted at the press. Koutroulis also prepared many of the stones and zincs from which the reds, pinks, acid greens and turquoise colors were pulled.

In addition to the suite, Kelly did six individual lithographs in various sizes up to 22x30". These are priced from \$50 to \$100 each and are untitled. All the Kelly works may be seen at the East Hampton Gallery in New York.

James Kelly was born in Philadelphia in 1913 and studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Barnes Foundation. After serving with the Air Force in World War II, he attended the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. In 1957 he taught art at the University of California, Berkeley. Kelly has exhibited nationally since 1952, has won many prizes and is represented in various major collections.

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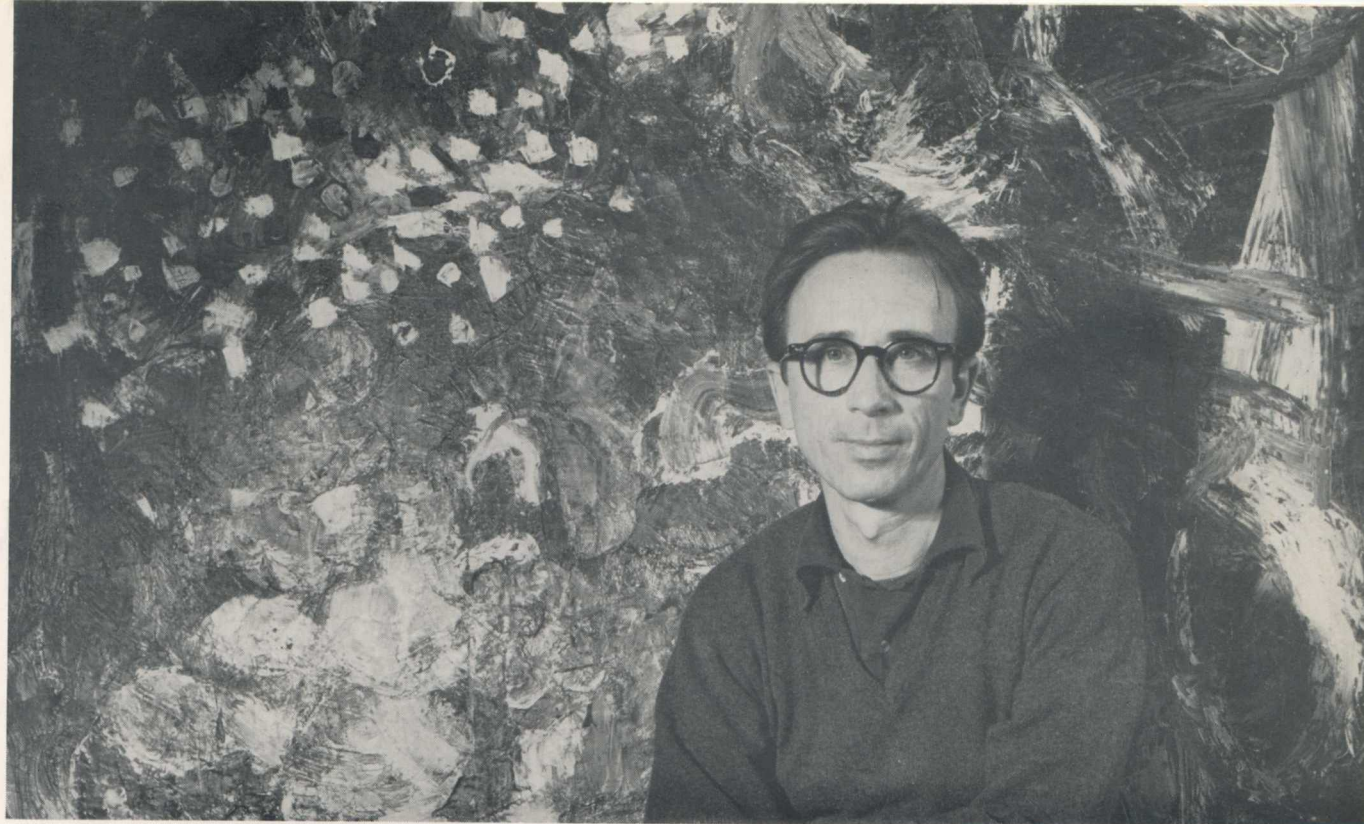
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MUSEUM OF ART

KELLY  
JAMES



ONE-MAN

KELLY



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EXPOSITION PARK

# JAMES KELLY

**sfaa GALLERY**

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL  
OF FINE ARTS

800 Chestnut Street  
San Francisco, California

**April 19 through May 18, 1956**





*Grey and Black*

IT IS GOOD TO KNOW THE ARTIST—AND THOSE OF US who have painted with James Kelly over a period of months and who have bought his paintings, prize them the more because we have known him and have witnessed his painstaking but brilliant creations. He is quiet—singularly devoid of the breast-beating, invokings and incantations of *'psychologie et psychiatre'* which so many lay people, critics and artists have employed as muses in the New Order of Painting: to defend, to explain, to denounce, as the case may be. He paints honestly and without fanfare, and no audience or critic stands between him and his vision—which is a powerfully direct one. His use of color is knowledgeable and pure. He possesses a wide tolerance, which allows him an unusual freedom. For himself, there is no discipline too exacting. Time and again we have been fascinated by the scope of his ideas, but appalled by his ruthlessness when triteness or untoward mannerisms crept in. They were wiped out, even though it meant tearing into a colossus he had spent weeks creating.

But the quality we came to recognize in James Kelly as distinctly his, is a kind of poetry of Irish fantasy, whether in a small intimate picture like the one I own, or in one of great magnitude, invested with majesty and power. He imparts this quality in telling content.

EARL ESCHER

AT NIGHT, BY A LAMP THAT ONLY SOMETIMES WORKED amid the sounds of arriving ships, I saw Kelly's pictures. The romanticism of distance, of agony and of longing, of decline and of despair that lay in the streets, stairs and hallways outside his studio were only remotely present in his work, and then only as expressions of the last days of another artist. Kelly's interest in people and in human situations, his belief in the possibility of human success and of human relationship, have caused to be left out of his work the powerful needs which lie in so many of the people around him and which are expressed in so many of the places through which he walks.

There at night, then, was a daytime painter, turned toward life. He believes that art, like physics or mathematics, can be a pursuit prosecuted for its own sake. And so there is a health in him, for he knows that his work has a purpose and that like any other research, his work is not only for him.

His work lies at the entrance, if it is not already within, to "now." He is interested in watching our lives and his own, in weighing, judging, and reacting to them, and in expressing these reactions in paint. A good portion of his health lies in this attention to "now" and in his assessment of the past in terms of "now." He rejects the fulfillment of life in a far future, in a lost golden age, or in an apocalyptic transfiguration of the present. He views his painting as a synthesis of and a contribution to the tradition of painting and therefore finds in the present, a link with the past and a passage to the future. He is satisfied with this position, feeling it is most human and most wise, not destructive (as many might think) but fostering new growth upon a still vital tree.

For this reason there is day in his work, the day of a good, bright morning. And though his studio and perhaps even the environment of his life lie far out upon the verge of despair and of night, he, with his artist's transforming eyes and life, makes his world mostly joy.

Let's let that be a context, then. Within these central polarities—central to us, not to Kelly—let's look at him some more, and in more detail. He doesn't care much for problems of the daemonic, nor is he interested in talking about classic harmony. His aim is to be an artist and to pay attention to art. He knows that talking of art is talking *about* it—around, beneath and above—and that art is really only making it. As a result of this, he rightly says that his pictures don't need speech. And it is self-evidently true—we can't speak them, we can only speak about them. But these two thoughts (of the daemonic and of classic harmony) rise again when he and we talk about his paintings.

Kelly's big paintings are direct and spontaneous, though their growth and completion may be spread out over six months. The small ones are carefully thought out, seldom taking more than two hours. Their size is the reason for the varying approach. The small painting demands a more mind-centered operation, a more thoughtful motion of the hand. It remains external to the artist, an object outside himself which is contrived with mind and hand to-



ward fulfillment of the desired, emotionally-felt sensation. A large painting allows, and often demands, a wider motion of the arm and a greater involvement of the body. It encompasses the artist—and his reaction to this encompassment, the actions his body makes in its enfoldment in the work—guides the work in its growth. Thus it happens that a larger painting is a stroke of life, a fragment of the artist's life because he lived and changed in it for perhaps six months. A smaller painting, in contrast, becomes a stroke of thought—the involvement of the intellect for an hour in the solution of the picture's puzzle.

"Like most modern artists," Kelly says, "I start with anything to get rid of the blankness of the canvas. Then I react from there." Ideally, according to his system, this reaction would be the pure give-and-take of life, complete with surprise, fear, joy and tragedy, all experienced in a simultaneity of thought and motion. The involvement which he seeks is the sense of a continuous, seamless, oneness of being. This involvement is the joy which keeps Kelly coming back to painting because this, in a thousand forms, is the only joy of any painter. And, since he is involved with growth in a time filled with unpleasant surprise and departure from the known, in these larger paintings Kelly touches upon the daemonic; his work enters the sphere where, although our words cannot be substitutes for the work, we can talk about it.



*Assault on K-2*

The involvement in the smaller works is a thoughtful one. These paintings are not lived in but rather do they live out their own brief periods of life from the first smear to the final resolving marks on their own, with only thought's assistance, and little of the pity and terror of involvement of the body. They are external to the artist and to his life, and are thus "abstractions" in a genuine sense. The larger paintings are what they are and not abstract; the smaller ones are abstract because they are the field upon which a thought, represented but no longer actually present, is played to its final resolution. And so, because these small paintings *are* thought, they have a classic harmony and again, can be talked about.

As in all talking, reality breaks the barriers. The stiff distinction drawn between two opposed types above, breaks down in the actuality of Kelly's painting. The pictures are not representative of two types but are, instead, changing syntheses of the opposition of the two types. They are certainly far more and far other than this.

I said above that Kelly's paintings are set into "now". He thinks that this is so because of his art's awareness of, and basis in the past. His works don't spring full blown and unknown from nothing; they aren't the direct and immediate yowl of current life. They are not unhistorical. These paintings are built with an awareness and love for past painting, and they stand as central testimony to the idea of pursuit which seems to give Kelly's life the balance often lacking in the lives of artists. The idea of pursuit could well be explored in talking about his work.

Artists in the past worked in art. They used visual ways of expressing their awareness of life, their judgements of it, their desires and fears for it. Their work found its way with directness to the audience for which it was intended. But the essential nature of their work, its visualness, its unity, was irrelevant to that intended audience and existed only for the artist himself and for his profession. This was the art in it. This, Kelly feels, is the art in his work also. He feels that the visualness and the unity in his work, the fact that these are based in the awareness of their presence in the art of the past, gives his work a depth and richness which cannot lie in work which claims to spring newly from now. His work is a flowering on the still living tree of art and bears, therefore, the full tide of life current in that tree. The work sprung fully new would be interesting only as a seed, and would have its depth only in the future. Because he feels himself a living growth in the tradition of art, Kelly does not feel alone. Because he feels that the art in his work is the same as the art in all other painting, he has few fears for the incommunicability of his work. But he knows also that the audience art had in its past was not often seeking the art in art, and that only artists have kept it alive. For this reason he expects little from art's audience today, and much from artists.





*San Andreas*

## CATALOGUE

1. Tunnel of Love
2. Seascape
3. Last Days of Dylan Thomas
4. Untitled, 53
5. Grey and Black
6. San Andreas
7. Untitled, 56-1
8. Untitled, 56-2
9. Small February Painting
10. Assault on K-2
11. Untitled, 56-3
12. Untitled, 56-4

Kelly has, then, a pursuit valid for its own sake, like physics or mathematics or philology. He has the arrogance and the security of a pursuit which need not consider itself in the light of some ultimate "why". He is a painter, and that is enough. His concern is with painters, and with speaking and agreeing with them upon the world around him. As a result of his certainty as to his position, and consequent upon its ease in maintenance, his work has the strength and assurance of a nightless morning, and he can walk easily along the brink where others only fall into despairing darkness.

He is, perhaps, also set into the "now" in a more broadly cultural sense. In art and little cultural magazines we read again and again of the damnation of life as the central notion of advanced contemporary art and thought. At the same time other journals—more solid perhaps financially, but surely no less intellectual in stature—tell us that American culture is entering a new phase of affirmation, peace and moderation. If the artist represents his age—and Kelly surely believes that he does—he might, in all unlikelihood, show it not as critics see his art, but as he sees the world around him. To explain: Kelly's work is centered in the looming "now" of affirmation (for he does not damn the past); of peace (the real war—of self with self—is absent in his work); and of moderation (the claim of universal judgement, of absolute condemnation—the true romantic excess—is absent also).

And thus in his statement of today he gives us also a cast upon the future.

F. M.

JAMES KELLY WHO NOW WORKS AND LIVES IN SAN FRANCISCO with his wife and daughter began painting before he was twenty. Born in Philadelphia he studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1938 and at the Barnes Foundation in 1941.

When war broke out Mr. Kelly enlisted in the Air Force and only resumed his painting after he was discharged in 1945. In 1951 he moved to San Francisco and studied at the California School of Fine Arts until 1954.

Although he has exhibited locally as well as in Philadelphia, New York and Los Angeles, the artist is having with this exhibition his first one-man show.

*Additional copies of the monographs prepared in connection with the following exhibitions are available at 15 cents each from the San Francisco Art Association: Ralph Du Casse, James McCray, Ernest Briggs, Leonard Edmondson and James Kelly.*